

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-02

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 CIEP-02

LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 SCEM-02 L-03 INT-08 FPC-01 SS-15

NSC-10 PRS-01 IO-13 RSR-01 /153 W

----- 119102

R 181641Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8148

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 4058

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, BE

SUBJECT: AVAILABILITY OF PROPANE

REF: STATE 131388

1. BELGIUM REFINES OVER HALF OWN NEEDS OF LPG, IMPORTING REST, WITH LIMITED EXPORTS TO FRENCH, LUXEMBOURG, DUTCH, AND GERMAN BORDER AREAS. PATTERN OF BELGIAN LPG CONSUMPTION CLEAR FROM 1972 FIGURES (IN METRIC TONS):

	PROPANE	BUTANE
PRODUCTION	180,000	210,000
IMPORTS	159,000	91,000
EXPORTS	26,000	91,000

2. LPG IS NOT SIGNIFICANT AS BELGIAN ENERGY SOURCE, COMPRISING BETWEEN 2 AND 4 PER CENT OF TOTAL POL ENERGY CONSUMPTION OVER PAST TEN YEARS. LOCAL LPG REFINING CAPABILITY SLIGHTLY IN EXCESS OF LOCAL MARKET REQUIREMENTS. STOCKS ARE KEPT LOW AND PRODUCTION GEARED STRICTLY TO MARKET DEMAND; THEREFORE NO UNCOMMITTED SUPPLIES EXIST OR ARE LIKELY TO EXIST.

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3. INASMUCH AS IMPORTER WITH ONLY NEGLIGIBLE AMOUNT OF CROSS BORDER

EXPORTING, QUESTION OF GOB EXPORTING POLICY IRRELEVANT.

4. IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT SELLING PRICE IN NEAR FUTURE AS INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT CURRENTLY DISCUSSING RETAIL PRICE STRUCTURE. INDUSTRY INTRODUCED BULK SALES PROPANE SEVERAL YEARS AGO AT PROMOTIONAL PRICE IN ORDER CREATE MARKET. INDUSTRY NOW ASKING GOVERNMENT FOR AUTHORITY INCREASE GENERAL PRICE LEVEL IN ADDITION OF INFLATION INCREASES BUT GOVERNMENT BALKING. PRICE QUESTION FOR LPG ONLY SMALL PART OF OVERALL QUESTION OF POL PRICE STRUCTURE IN BELGIUM WHICH IS SUBJECT OF COMPLICATED AND ACrimonious DEBATE AMONG INDUSTRY, TRADE UNIONS, AND MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS. DEBATE UNDERWAY FOR PAST 18 MONTHS AND NOT LIKELY TO BE SETTLED BEFORE END OF THIS YEAR. BOOCHEVER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 JUL 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973BRUSSE04058
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS BOOCHEVER
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: BRUSSELS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730727/aaaaatkj.tel
Line Count: 75
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 STATE 131388
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29-Aug-2001 by smithrj>; APPROVED <01-Nov-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AVAILABILITY OF PROPANE
TAGS: ENRG, BE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005